

Pine Nut Land Health

PUBLIC SCOPING

DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2013-0017-EA

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District
Sierra Front Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV 89701
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BLM Seeks Input on the Pine Nut Land Health Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Carson City District, Sierra Front Field Office is proposing a land health project in the Pine Nut Mountains, Douglas, Lyon and Carson City Counties, Nevada. The Pine Nut Land Health Project (Project) would be implemented over a 10-year period to restore ecological balance, diversity and resilience to plant communities and reduce hazardous fuels to protect people, property, infrastructure and resources from severe wildfire.

The purpose and need of the proposed project is to improve the health and resiliency of vegetation in the Pine Nut Mountains:

- Restore and maintain sagebrush habitat (including approximately 19,195 acres of Bi-State sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat);
- Restore and maintain riparian plant communities;
- Restore and maintain wet meadows and springs;
- Protect and enhance historic pinyon-juniper woodland habitat;
- Reduce the potential of large-scale high severity wildland fire;
- Provide for public and firefighter safety and protection of property and infrastructure; and
- Provide woodland products to the public, tribes and commercial entities.

The Proposed Action is to implement vegetation treatments on up to 26,252 acres in strategically located treatment units. Specific treatments would be proposed for specific treatments units based on vegetation condition and objectives. Proposed vegetation treatments may be implemented individually or in combination depending on site conditions within the treatment units. Treatments currently proposed are hand thinning of trees and brush (selective cutting), hand cutting of trees (non-selective cutting), mechanical mastication of trees and brush, mechanical thinning/removal of trees, prescribed fire (pile burning) and seeding.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act, an environmental assessment is required to evaluate the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the human environment from the Proposed Action.

At this early stage in the Project development we ask for your input on:

1. Do you have unique knowledge about the project area and/or resources in the project area?
2. Do you know of resource conflicts in the project area?
3. Do you have any other substantive input into this proposal at this early stage?

Maps and the comment form are available on the Project website at:

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field/blm_information/nepa.html

How to Comment

A public workshop will be held at the BLM's Carson City District Office on Thursday April 11, 2013; the workshop will be from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm. The format will be an open house, not a hearing. The workshop will be held at 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, Nevada.

The 30-day scoping period is from April 3 to May 2, 2013.

Should you have any questions, or to submit your comments, contact: Brian Buttazoni, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, 5665 Morgan Mill Rd, Carson City, Nevada 89701 or email at: bbuttazoni@blm.gov. For more information call: 775-885-6004. Comments can also be faxed to: 775-885-6147 Attn: Brian Buttazoni.

Privacy notice: Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, and may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold your personal identifying information from public review, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish to withhold your personal information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Resources Considered for Analysis

The following resources were considered during an internal interdisciplinary team meeting on this proposal held on March 25, 2013. Based on that review, resources *present* and *may be affected* by this proposal would be fully analyzed in the EA.

Category I, Supplemental Authorities.

Resource	Present Yes/No	Affected Yes/No	Rationale
Air Quality	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	N		Resource not present.
Cultural Resources	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Environmental Justice	N		Resource not present.
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	N		Resource not present.
Floodplains	N		Resource not present.
Invasive, Nonnative Species	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Migratory Birds	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Native American Religious Concerns	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Threatened or Endangered Species (animals)	N		Resource not present.
Threatened or Endangered Species (plants)	N		Resource not present.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	N		Resource not present.
Water Quality (Surface/Ground)	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	N		Resource not present.
Wilderness/WSA	Y	??	Adjacent to the Burbank Wilderness Study Area; under review.

Category II, Other Resources.

Resource or Issue**	Present Yes/No	Affected Yes/No	Rationale
BLM Sensitive Species (animals)	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
BLM Sensitive Species (plants)	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Fire Management/Vegetation	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Forest Resources	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
General Wildlife	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Global Climate Change	Y	N	Although there is a public and scientific debate about human-caused contributions to global climate change, no methodology currently exists to correlate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from the Proposed Action, and to what extent these contributions would

			contribute to global climate change.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Y	N	Under the Proposed Action there would be negligible contribution of a GHG, no methodology currently exists to correlate GHG emissions from pile burning and vehicle/equipment emissions to any specific resource impact within the project area.
Land Use Authorization	Y	N	Although right-of-ways are present in the project area, none of the alternatives would affect these authorizations and activities.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	??	??	To be determined if any are present, pursuant to Sections 101, 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
Livestock Grazing	Y	N	Although the project area overlaps with several active grazing allotments, this project would not result in a change in allocation of forage to livestock. As a result of tree removal there may be a marginal increase in forage, a minor beneficial effect that does not warrant full analysis.
Minerals	Y	N	Although mining claims are present in the project area, none of the alternatives would affect any on-going mining activities.
Paleontological	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Recreation	Y	N	Although dispersed recreation is present in the project area, none of the alternatives would affect recreational activities.
Socioeconomics	N		Resource not present.
Soils	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Travel Management	N		Resource not present.
Vegetation	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Visual Resources	Y	Y	To be evaluated in the EA.
Wild Horses and Burros	Y	N	Although a portion of the project area overlaps with the Pine Nut Herd Management Area, this project would not result in a change in allocation of forage to wild horses. As a result of tree removal there may be a marginal increase in forage, a minor beneficial effect that does not warrant full analysis.

The draft EA for this proposal would be made available for a 30-day public review and comment period in the summer or fall of 2013.

Preliminary Identification of Resource Issues

Air Quality

- The project has the potential to effect air quality. The project may result in a localized short-term affect on air quality in the vicinity of treatments as a result of smoke generated from potential prescribed burning and exhaust and fugitive dust emissions generated by equipment and power tools.

Biological Resources

- The project area is within Bi-State sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) preliminary priority habitat, a BLM sensitive species and candidate for listing on the Endangered Species Act.

Cultural Resources

- The mechanical treatment proposed in this project has the potential to adversely affect historic properties. Per 36 CFR Part 800 and 43 CFR Part 8100 (BLM), as amended, BLM is required to identify and evaluate cultural resources within the area of potential effect for this project. Historic properties identified and evaluated as eligible under the National Register of Historic places will be avoided with a buffer during implementation to result in no adverse effect to the historic property(ies).
- The Native American tribes that has cultural affiliation with the area are the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Yerington Paiute Tribe and the Walker River Paiute Tribe. Per 36 CFR Part 800 and 43 CFR Part 8100 (BLM), as amended, consultation with the tribes will occur and remain on-going through implementation.

Visual Resources/Wilderness Study Areas

- The a portion of the project area is located within Visual Resource Management Class II and directly adjacent to to the Burbank Wilderness Study Area.